

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

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R 041845Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8690

INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 8061

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJ: POLITICAL PARTIES MEET WITH MRS. PERON AND CABINET
MINISTERS

REF: BA 7545

1. SUMMARY: OCT 28 MEETING BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS AND MRS. PERON AND HER CABINET MINISTERS RESULTED IN FRANK, SOMETIMES HEATED EXCHANGE. PARTIES CRITICIZED GOVERNMENT PRINCIPALLY ON THREE COUNTS: A) ITS HANDLING OF TERRORIST PROBLEM, B) ITS HANDLING OF UNIVERSITY PROBLEM, AND C) ACTIONS OF FEDERAL INTERVENTOR IN CORDOBA. MRS. PERON PLAYED MODERATING ROLE AND MOST PARTY REPS LEFT BELIEVING MEETING HAD BEEN POSITIVE. MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS, OR CONSEQUENCES, WERE: A) DIALOGUE WAS CONTINUED, B) MRS. PERON'S IMAGE WAS FURTHER STRENGTHENED, C) SEVERAL MINISTERS, INCLUDING LOPEZ REGA, DID NOT SHOW TO ADVANTAGE, THUS LEADING TO SPECULATION THAT AT LEAST TO SOME EXTENT THEIR POSITIONS HAD BEEN WEAKENED, D) MRS. PERON INVITED BALBIN TO A PRIVATE CONFERENCE--SOMETHING UCR HAS BEEN PUSHING FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

2. OCT 28 MEETING WAS HELD IN PRIVATE. PRESS HAS MANAGED TO
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RECONSTRUCT MUCH OF WHAT WENT ON BY INTERVIEWING THOSE PRESENT.

EMBASSY HAS BEEN ABLE TO FILL IN HOLES BY TALKING TO ITS OWN CONTACTS WHO WERE THERE. ALL HAVE AGREED THAT EXCHANGE WAS FRANK AND POINTED. SEVERAL CABINET MINISTERS REACTED ANGRILY TO CRITICISM, BUT IN EACH CASE MRS. PERON RESTORED ORDER AND CALMED TEMPER. HIGH-RANKING UCR SOURCE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT IN DEPARTING MEETING BALBIN HAD COMMENTED THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A DISASTER HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR STRONG ROLE PLAYED BY PRESIDENT.

3. PRINCIPAL CRITICISM WAS DIRECTED AT GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF VIOLENCE. THERE WERE NOT ONLY SUGGESTIONS THAT STEPS TAKEN HAD BEEN LESS THAN EFFECTIVE, THERE WERE ALSO THINLY VEILED INFERENCES THAT GOVT WAS BEHIND AAA AND THUS WAS RAISING RATHER THAN LOWERING LEVEL OF VIOLENCE. AT ONE POINT IN STATEMENT OF MARTINEZ RAYMONDA, OF PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS, MRS. PERON BROKE INTO TEARS AND SAID PARTIES CONSTANTLY RAISED QUESTION OF TERRORISM BUT THEY NEVER OFFERED ANY SOLUTIONS. MARTINEZ RAYMONDA CALMLY PROCEEDED TO OUTLINE MEASURES WITHIN LAW WHICH GOVT SHOULD TAKE.

4. PRC REP REMINDED MRS. PERON THAT PRC LEADER SUELDO HAD RECENTLY CHALLENGED HER TO CONDEMN THE AAA. SHE DID NOT DO SO, THOUGH GOVT SIDE OF COURSE DENIED ALL SUGGESTIONS THAT AAA IS OFFICIALLY INSPIRED OR SUPPORTED. LOPEZ REGA SAID THERE WERE RUMORS LINKING HIM TO AAA. HE NOT ONLY DENIED THAT THEY WERE TRUE BUT ADDED THAT HE OFTEN FELT HIMSELF TO BE THREATENED BY AAA (LEADING ONE MODERATE PERONIST TO COMMENT SARCASTICALLY TO EMBOFFS NEXT DAY THAT IF LOPEZ REGA HAVING TROUBLE WITH AAA IT MUST BE IN THE NATURE OF A LABOR DISPUTE).

5. ALL PARTIES ALSO CRITICIZED LINE GOVT HAD TAKEN AT UNIVERSITY--GENERAL COMMENT BEING THAT IT HAD REPLACED EXTREME LEFT WITH EXTREME RIGHT, NEITHER OF WHICH SHOULD HAVE DOMINANT ROLE IN A DEMOCRACY. CRITICISM OBVIOUSLY GOT UNDER EDUCATION MIN IVANISSEVICH'S SKIN AND LED TO SHOUTING MATCH WITH INTRANSIGENTE LEADER OSCAR ALENDE. MRS. PERON STEPPED IN, TOLD FORMER TO CALM DOWN AND APOLOGIZED TO ALENDE AND OTHERS FOR IVANISEVICH'S EPITHETS. (NOTE: GOVT WAS FURTHER EMBARRASSED ON UNIVERSITY ISSUE BY STATEMENTS OF RAUL ZARDINI, NEWLY APPOINTED RECOTOR OF FACULTY OF EXACT SCIENCES, WHO ON OCT

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31 LAUDED MUSSOLINI REGIME IN ITALY AND SAID HE WOULD ADHERE TO NEW UNIVERSITY LAW ONLY TO EXTENT IT DID NOT COMROMISE HIS PRINCIPLES. THIS LED TO IMMEIDATE CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS FROM BOTH UCR AND MODERATE PERONISTS THAT HE SHOULD RESIGN IF HE FELT THAT WAY. IT ALSO TENDED TO CONFIRM CHARGES VOICED ON OCT 28 AND PREVIOUSLY THAT GOVT HAS INSTALLED SEVERAL OUT-AND-OUT FASCISTS AT UNIVERSITY.)

6. ALL PARTIES WERE CRITICAL OF FEDERAL INTERVENTOR LACABANNES ACTIONS IN CORDOBA. NOT SURPRISINLGY, COMMUNIST PARTY (PCA) WAS MOST CRITICAL, CHARGING HIM WITH HAVING BEEN BEHIND ILLEGAL RAID ON PCA HEADQUARTERS ON OCT 9 AND BEHIND ARREST, TORTURE AND DEATH OF AT LEAST ONE PCA MEMBER. PCA CALLED FOR LACABANNES IMMEIDATE RESIGNATION. UCR DID NOT SECOND THE DEMAND, HOWEVER AND COMING FROM PCA IT PROBABLY WILL HAVE LITTLE EFFECT.

7. OTERO AS WELL AS IVANISSOVICH REPORTEDLY WAS FLUSTERED AND UNABLE TO RESPOND ADEQUATELY TO QUESTIONS ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS. OTERO ALSO REPORTEDLY GOT INTO ARGUMENT WITH LOPEZ REGA DURING MEETING. THERE WERE RUMORS OF CABINET CRISIS FOLLOWING MEETING INVOLVING BOTH OTERO AND IVANISSEVICH. PRESS SECRETARY FLATLY DENIED THEM AT END OF WEEK. (SINCE VILLONE ALSO DENIED RUMORS OF GELBARDS RESIGNATION LESS THAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE LATTER DID RESIGN, VILLONES CREDIBILITY IS NOT HIGH). MOST INTERESTING BYPLAY AT MEETING WAS BETWEEN LOPEZ REGA AND MRS. PERON. WHEN HE INTERRUPTED HER AT ONE POINT, SHE TOLD HIM SHARPLY TO WAIT UNTIL SHE HAD FINISHED. ON ANOTHER OCCASION, AS HE WAS HOLDING FORTH ON HIS VIEWS OF WHERE GOVT SHOULD BE HEADING, SHE ANGRILY SLAMMED HAND ON DESK AND SAID IT WAS NOT A QUESTION OF WHAT HE THOUGH; RATHER THEY WERE SIMPLY FOLLLIWNNG GEN PERON'S GUIDELINES.

8. ON LATTER POINT, UCR CONTRACTS HAVE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT IF NOTHING ELSE, MEETING GAVE BALBIN OPPORTUNITY TO EMPHASIZE TO MRS. PERON THAT HERE HUSBAND VALUED THE DIALOGUE AND WOULD HAVE WISHED IT CONTINUED. FURTHER, BALBIN TOLD MRS. PERON FRANKLY THAT WHILE SOME PERONIST SEEMED TO BELIEVE THAT THE SEVEN MILLION VOTES THEY HAD WON GAVE THEM RIGHT TO IGNORE OPPOSITION, FACT WAS THAT IT WAS THE UNITY AND CONSENSUS AMONG THE PARTIES FIRST EXPRESSED IN THE HORA DEL PUEBLO WHICH HAD MADE THE WHOLE PROCESS, INCLUDING ELECTIONS AND PERON'S RETURN, CONFIDENTIAL

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POSSIBLE. MRS. PERON EXPRESSED FULL APPRECIATION OF THIS FACT. AT END OF MEETING MRS. PERON INVITED BALBIN TO "HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE WITH HER" VERY SOON SO THAT TWO COULD TALK PRIVATELY ABOUT SOME OF THE PROBLEMS. THIS WOULD REPRESENT A CONTINUATION OF THE TALKS BALBIN HAD WITH GEN PERON AND WOULD MEAN A GREAT DEAL TO THE UCR.

9. WHILE MOST PARTY REPS DESCRIBED MEETING AS POSITIVE, SEVERAL HAVE EXPRESSED OPINION THAT IT MAY BE LAST AND THAT MRS. PERON MAY MOVE INSTAED TO PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH BALBIN.

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